



Rich Gulch Trail



Low clouds rest in this view of Shasta Bally from Rich Gulch Trail.

TRAIL HEAD DIRECTIONS

Starting at the Whiskeytown Visitor Center, drive south on Kennedy Memorial Drive towards Whiskeytown Dam. The road forks. Continue on the right fork, crossing over the dam. The paved road winds around the lake to the Brandy Creek Beach area. Turn left on Shasta Bally Road (turns into a dirt road) driving up approximately 2.5 miles toward Sheep Camp. Turn left at the junction of Brandy Creek Falls Trail Road and the road to Sheep Camp/Shasta Bally.

After approximately one mile, look to the right for a small parking area.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION

Walk up the road a short distance, looking to the left for the Brandy Creek Falls trail head sign. Follow this trail for approximately 0.75 miles to connect with the Rich Gulch Trail.

This trail is an old logging road that crosses over the ridge into the Brandy Creek drainage. The trail is generally uphill towards the Brandy Creek Falls with sections of gentle gradient that make for a good hike or bike ride through the park.

- 1.8 miles one way
- Trail generally uphill along gentle gradient
- Vistas of Shasta Bally Mountain, second growth forest
- Connects to Brandy Creek Falls Trail
- Creek crossing



1950s era Shasta County log truck.

This was a major haul road for loggers in the 1950s as the forest was logged for ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. The trail provides some vistas of Shasta Bally mountain along the way. Black bear are commonly seen in this portion of the park.

The Rich Gulch Trail joins the Brandy Creek Falls Trail on the left, about halfway before the lower falls. The trail is mostly shaded in second growth forest. As the trail continues, it will cross over Rich Gulch Creek. It will eventually end at the Brandy Creek Falls Road. Turn left to walk up the road and return to the parking area.

Extensive erosion can be seen on the old logging road which was never engineered or maintained after the loggers took the timber and left. The legacy of the passing timber industry is seen in abandoned skid trails, failed culvert crossings and inboard drainage gullies that have contributed to extensive erosion. Over 300 miles of abandoned logging and mining roads exist throughout Whiskeytown National Recreation Area.

Today, the National Park Service and volunteers are rehabilitating these old roads into trails with improved grades and erosion control measures to restore the natural contours and drainages. Some old roads like the Rich Gulch Trail will be converted to non-motorized trails for the public to enjoy.

Douglas Fir, An Important Species

Douglas fir is one of the most common tree species at Whiskeytown. Its name Pseudo-tsuga menziesii, refers to the fact that it is not what it appears to be. "Pseudo" refers to false and "tsuga" to hemlock. There was some controversy when scientists first tried to classify this tree. Its flat needles are similar to a fir, but the cones are more like spruce cones and not at all like those of the fir. Botanists finally decided it was most closely related to the hemlocks.

Archibald Menzies of Scotland, physician and naturalist, discovered the tree now called Douglas Fir in 1791 on Vancouver Island, British Columbia while on a British exploration expedition

David Douglas, Scottish botanist, rediscovered the tree during one of several journeys made to North America between 1823 and 1834 to study American plants. He was one of the earliest travelers in the Oregon Country and California.

Douglas Fir is one of the largest and most valuable timber trees in the world. It is the source of more lumber than any other species of tree in North America. Its rapid growth and longevity and its thick corky bark make it fire-resistant. It is also home to various plants and animals that cannot live anywhere else.



SAFETY

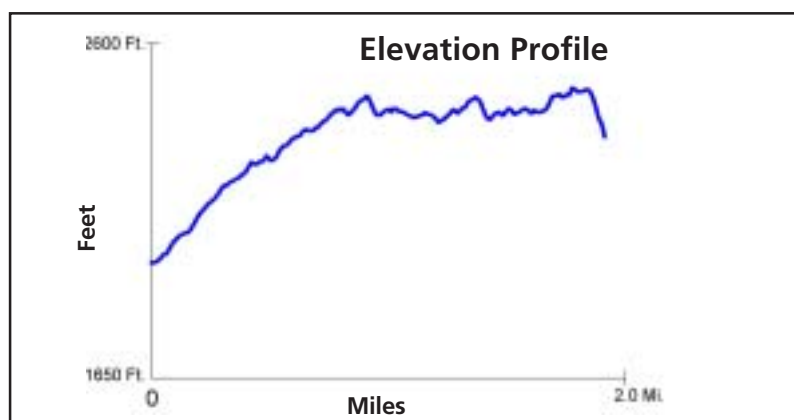
Hikers should stay back from steep edges along canyons and watch for slippery rocks while crossing streams.



Showy Phlox (*Phlox speciosa*)



Yellow Violet (*Viola lobata*)



Douglas Fir Cone (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) found along the trail.